

Department of Land and Natural Resources

Sustainability Hotspot

1

AHIHI-KINAU NATURAL AREA RESERVE

~Island of Maui~



Top to bottom: Aerial of Ahihi-Kinau NAR, anchialine (brackish water) pond in the reserve, illegal fishing threatens the area's fish populations, Ahihi-Kinau offers calm waters for swimmers.

Natural Area Reserves (NARs) are among the most highly protected State lands. They protect the best of what is left of Hawaii's unique biological and geological resources. The Ahihi-Kinau Reserve is situated near the end of the road at Makena on Maui, and is the only reserve in DLNR's system that includes a marine section as well as a land section. It is one of only two areas on Maui where fishing is restricted.

Within the reserve are the only three miles of coastline out of 120 total miles of coastline on Maui that are totally protected, where no type of fishing, collecting of any marine life or motorized vessel is allowed. The land section of the reserve is comprised of the last lava flow on Maui (circa, 1780) and includes rare anchialine, or brackish water, ponds.

Problems within the Reserve include:

- unregulated commercial kayak activity creating public user conflicts in small coves within the reserve;
- illegal fishing and intrusion into the reserve by motorized vessels creating concerns about DLNR being able to sustain the area as a refuge and genetic pool reserve for marine species;
- reef fish populations in the reserve lacking in type and abundance. *Opihi* (limpets) are conspicuously missing from much of the coastline;
- a rugged and remote lava coastline which makes management and protection of this area difficult. Other more easily accessible areas of the reserve are experiencing increased visitation from a growing resident and visitor population looking for recreational opportunities.

DLNR's Sustainability Hotspot Team, comprised of:

Billy Evanson - Forestry and Wildlife, Maui, 871-2620;
Boyd Dixon - Historic Preservation;
Skippy Hau - Aquatic Resources;
Stanley Okamoto - Conservation and Resources Enforcement;
Phil Ohta - Land Division;
Chuck Penque - Boating and Ocean Recreation;

is responsible for management of Ahihi-Kinau Natural Area Reserve and the growing user conflicts affecting the site.

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2

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Top to bottom: Cultural resources are numerous within the reserve, the rocky and rugged coastline make enforcement of conservation laws difficult, no motorized vessels are allowed within the confines of the reserve, DLNR hopes to make Ahihi-Kinau an outdoor resource laboratory.

DLNR's Vision for the Future and How to Attain It:

In DLNR's vision for the future, this reserve shall contain as many relatively unmodified resources as is possible. Reef fish species and *opihi* will be present in abundance. Coral cover will be intact and free from the threats of dredging, siltation and anchoring. Anchialine ponds, archaeological sites and geological features will be preserved intact. DLNR's desire is to develop a place that serves as an outdoor classroom where children and adults can learn about resources not found elsewhere, so that we may all better understand the importance of preserving and protecting Hawaii's unique resources. Some of these assets, like cultural sites, are non-renewable and finite. **Once destroyed and gone... they are gone forever.**

To insure this reserve is protected and preserved:

- a long-term resource and threat monitoring system must be implemented to guide and assess management actions;
- a greater presence in the area by DLNR staff and/or volunteers, along with support equipment, is necessary to provide adequate information, interpretation and enforcement;
- rule revisions are needed that give DLNR authority to carefully regulate human activity within the reserve;
- buoys to mark the marine boundary and fencing on land are deemed necessary to provide for adequate enforcement;
- increased signage of both regulatory and interpretive types are also needed to provide adequate public notice of the reserve's highly protective status;

To implement DLNR's vision for the future and sustain Ahihi-Kinau for the benefit of future generations, we must contract for necessary surveys, hire 2 NARs Technicians, 2 Conservation and Resources Enforcement officers, 1 archaeologist, and 4 additional support staff, purchase necessary equipment and develop facilities. Total budget for this effort comes to nearly \$3 million. 🌺

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3

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Above: Reef fish populations in the reserve are lacking in type and abundance. *Opihi* (limpets) are conspicuously missing from much of the coastline. Illegal fishing along this rugged and remote lava coastline creates concerns about DLNR being able to sustain the area as a refuge and genetic pool reserve for marine species.



DLNR's Hotspot Team for Ahihi-Kinau NAR: (top row, l-r) Evanson, Dixon, Hau, (bottom row) Okamoto, Ohta, Penque.